# REFORMATION TODAY '75

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# Editorial

IT IS GOOD TO WELCOME NEW CONTRIBUTORS TO THE MAGAZINE IN THIS issue. Rod Badams is a member of a Baptist church in Hove. After reading his article readers may wonder if there is anything they can do in society to prevent the increasing corruption which is taking place. The article by Alan Kreider highlights the powerful part which can be played by the local church as a gathered company of believers.

*Baruch Maoz*

The cover picture shows Baruch Maoz, who has been enabled to edit and produce a remarkable quarterly in the Hebrew language. It is about the same size as this magazine but with an occasional inset of twelve pages of news. Baruch draws his material from contemporary Reformed magazines and from the best writers of the past. He has been given an obvious flair for editing. When last, if ever, did Israel have a journal of this character? There is no room for complacency, however, only prayer, as the situation in the Middle East is always precarious.

*Do you swear?*

"Do you swear" is the substance of an evangelistic article by the editor which appeared in a local secular newspaper. The continuing decline in the standards of language calls for more vigorous proclamation of the 3rd commandment. It is particularly obnoxious to hear state leaders blaspheming in public. Some people were shocked to hear the language used by ex-President Nixon. When President Ford, who was hailed by some as a Christian, succeeded him, we might have expected better things. But we find him apparently almost as unashamed to swear as anyone else.

*Carey*

Carey Publications are pressing on with the preparation of the book by Peter Lewis on the Puritans. This will include most valuable thumb-nail sketches of the main characters of the Puritan era. Demand for the 1689 Confession in modern English, *A Faith to Confess* (45 pence), has been excellent. Orders have come in from many countries including some behind the iron curtain. *Marriage and the Family,* by Douglas Jones (36 pence), is proving useful for pastoral situations.

*Family Conference*

The Family Conference at Pilgrim Hall, near Uckfield, Sussex, will be held this year from September 1-5. The main speaker will be Martin Holdt from South Africa who is the agent for *Reformation Today* in that country, and pastor of a Baptist church in East London. The evening meetings of the conference are open to the public. Pastor Holdt will also be preaching in the Cuckfield pulpit on August 24 and 31.

*Future articles*

Our associate editor in Scotland, John Davison, is preparing a fascinating article on the Puritan Meeting House. Material on Whitefield's orphanage should soon be appearing along with other edifying expository writing. We are grateful for the opportunities to make these known.

*The fifth article in the series on experience by the editor deals with a subject which has become increasingly controversial.*

# Christian Experience— The Baptism of the Spirit

IN PREVIOUS ARTICLES WE HAVE SEEN THAT THE REALM OF SPIRITUAL experience is broad. Experiences are diverse. We cannot afford to neglect any aspect; nor should we allow one kind of experience to be exalted at the expense of others. We have seen humiliation because of sin to be essential. Joy because of justification and love because of adoption form main pillars in the temple of Christian experience. Of necessity believers go through times of trial and chastisement when they learn much and advance on the road to conformity to Christ, which we call sanctification. The rôle of the person of the Holy Spirit in experience is, of course, central to all Christian experience. We come now to consider the Holy Spirit's work as follows:

1. In regeneration.
2. In filling individuals.
3. In baptising the Church.

*1. In regeneration*

God the Holy Spirit is the agent (the one who executes or performs a work) of the creation of the world. He is the author of the Scriptures. He inspired the prophets of old. That Christ was conceived by the virgin Mary was of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35) and he anointed our Lord for his ministry. He was also the one through whom Christ gave himself as an offering for sin. He raised our Lord from the dead. The creation and the resurrection were Trinitarian acts inasmuch as the three persons of the Trinity acted in concert together but the Holy Spirit was the immediate agent in those acts of power (Rom. 1:4).

In the forming of the Church the Holy Spirit's special work is regeneration and sanctification. Election, predestination, calling, justification and glorification are designated as being from the Father (Rom. 8:28 ff.). Christ's work was to become our righteousness through his life on earth and our redemption through his death on the cross. His present work is to intercede for us at the right hand of God and to work in the application of redemption. The Spirit's major work is to regenerate and sanctify the elect of God.

An understanding of regeneration is important not only because of the foremost place it has in salvation but also because so many talk today of the baptism of the Spirit as though it was a second regeneration. The idea that prevails is that there is first the conversion experience and then some time after that it is necessary for a Christian to have a second experience in which something happens to him so that he is never the same again—a kind of second regeneration is supposed to take place. So you have second-rate or half-regenerated Christians and first-rate, wholly-regenerated Christians. Oft-repeated stories of the experiences of Charles Finney and D. L. Moody, plus the account of what happened when Paul was at Ephesus (Acts 19:2) are frequently cited to support what is a totally confused and unscriptural idea.

That every Christian is regenerated or born again once and once only is fundamental. When born again he is wholly born, not half-born, but wholly for time and for eternity. The analogy of birth holds good in that as the babe grows and develops so the believer born of God grows and makes progress. Where there is spiritual birth there is spiritual life and if there is no spiritual life it is because there never has been spiritual birth. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6). The force of our Lord's words to Nicodemus is unmistakable. He is asserting the reality of spiritual life once it is born in an individual in contrast to the fleshly life of the unregenerate. Now this regeneration is referred to in different ways. It is called a quickening together with Christ from spiritual death (Eph. 2:5); the dead hearing and believing to eternal life (John 5:24, 25); a resurrection of power by God from the dead (Eph. 1:19, 20); a new birth by God's will (James 1:18, 1 Pet. 1:3). It is also referred to as a baptism. "For by one Spirit are we all baptised into one body" (1 Cor. 12:13).

Happily we are not afraid of this word baptism because it is a meaningful word not to be deprived of its potency. It means to immerse, to dip, to submerge or to overwhelm. Though theological magicians perform their conjuring rites and ceremonies before this word in a futile attempt to change it to mean something else they will never succeed. This is because it has never meant "to sprinkle" and never will. During the whole existence of Greek it has had a perfectly defined and unvarying meaning employed in that same sense by John the Baptist, our Lord and his apostles.[1] It is a word used to convey the meaning of immersion or submerging and the concept is that which is total and radical, complete and final.

When we are baptised into Christ we are made one with Christ and that act of the Holy Ghost is an act which is total and final. It is the new birth. Believers have by this regenerating act been made one with Christ in his death and resurrection. We have been baptised in and by the Spirit. If a person has not been baptised in the Spirit and by the Spirit into

Christ then he is outside of Christ and still in his sins. Every believer without exception has been baptised into Christ by the Spirit.[2] (If the reader is confused by the prepositions used: *in* the Spirit and *by* the Spirit, please refer to the footnote at this point.)

This spiritual baptism is referred to by Paul when he declares, "For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ" (Col. 3:27). How could it be otherwise but that those joined to Christ have his life? He continues to assert that all believers, irrespective of any human distinctions whatsoever, are thereby "one in Christ" (Gal. 3:28). Likewise to the Romans Paul puts the fundamental question, don't you know that so many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ were baptised into his death? He concludes that we were therefore buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:3, 4). The great majority of commentators take baptism in Romans 6:3, 4 to mean "water baptism"—Calvin, Lange, Lightfoot, Shedd, Hodge, Vincent, Haldane, Barnes and John Murray to name just a few. Water baptism is the symbol of Spirit baptism since it approximates so closely and depicts so accurately the union with Christ effected in spiritual baptism. The consensus of expository opinion is right therefore in taking Romans 6:3, 4 to refer to water baptism as the symbol of union with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection. Is it possible for two things to be spoken of together, the symbol and the reality? The answer surely is, yes! For instance when we speak of the cup we mean two things at the same time—the cup which contains the literal wine as a symbol, and communion with Christ which is an invisible but nonetheless living reality—not the one or the other, but both together (1 Cor. 12:16, 17).

When Paul speaks of "one Lord, one faith, one baptism", to the Ephesians, that momentus initiation of all believers into one Lord by means of the one faith is indicated. This spiritual baptism, our initiation into Christ, is visibly and symbolically portrayed by water baptism which our Lord has commanded and which is thus obligatory for all believers (Mark 16:16, Matt. 28:18-20, Acts 2:38). The amazing reality of spiritual union with Christ in his death and resurrection is perfectly expressed in the ordinance of baptism by burial in water. The burial simultaneously points to the death and resurrection of Christ by which the believer is identified with God, not partially nor half-heartedly but totally and radically. By the death of Christ (which he himself referred to as a baptism, Mark 10:39) all the believer's sins are washed away for ever. The believer is justified by faith. Justification is never partial. It is one hundred per cent. By virtue of union with Christ the believer now has the life of Christ—and hence is to walk in newness of life. He does not possess half of Christ or a quarter, to receive the other part later. In regeneration he is united to the whole of Christ by the whole of the Holy

Spirit. He does not have a stingy ration of the Holy Spirit, to receive a great part later. He has the Holy Spirit as a person—not part, but all of the Holy Spirit as a person in him to carry on the work of conformity to Christ which will continue throughout his earthly pilgrimage.

Regeneration produces faith (John 1:12, 13) and faith joins the believer to Christ. The believer is married to Christ (Jer. 3:14, John 17:23; 15:4) and by marriage to Christ is married to God. Water-immersion, therefore, is the sign and seal of what has already taken place in the Spirit.

What effect does this baptism into Christ have upon a person's experience? Paul tells us, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things have passed away: behold all things are become new". On the day of writing this I interviewed a man requesting baptism and church membership. He believes he was born again in a public house. The change was such that he instantly left his beer mug, half-filled, and never returned. Such was the change that he forgot all about his bicycle which he had left outside. After fourteen days he remembered it, went back and to his amazement found it untouched! He had been wholly taken up with a new life. All things became new—thoughts, affections, language and actions. All things became *new*—but not perfect. Justification is perfect but the sanctification that follows is a process and involves progress. Perfect holiness is never attained in his life. This newness of life consists of *a walk*. A whole supply of energy and life is required for walking from one year to the next. In the spiritual life a world of spiritual supply is required and this the Holy Spirit does impart from the moment of new birth forward. It is not as though the Spirit by one fantastic operation either at the moment of birth or in a later experience so affects a believer that he is from then on enabled to live a life of power. The spiritual life is a moment-by-moment, day-to-day experience. Our Lord promised that the Holy Spirit would be in us (John 14:17)—"He shall be in you"—not a little bit of him—but as a person, as God in the whole of his personality, he will be in you!

To what measure is he in all believers? We consider now the subject of the filling of the Spirit.

*2. In filling individuals*

The Holy Spirit regenerates us, seals us, anoints us, communes with us, assures us, enables us, sanctifies us and fills us. All these aspects are different and wherever distinctions are indicated in Scripture it behoves us to observe these distinctive features.

Regeneration takes place in an instant, in a moment or in the twinkling of an eye. With regeneration comes sealing and anointing. Sealing has to do with assurance and anointing with understanding. Since both sealing and anointing are often confused with the idea of a personal baptism

of the Spirit it will be helpful to comment on these aspects of the Holy Spirit's work.

*Sealing.* A seal is a stamp or impression stamped upon an object to indicate ownership and authentication of possession, the seal bearing the distinctive crest or insignia of the owner. The lineaments or character of Christ have been stamped or sealed upon and within the believer. In the new nature he has been made after the likeness of Christ. The old man (Col. 3:9) is gone for ever. A sealed person can never again be unregenerate. The fleshly and carnal elements (Rom. 7:13-25, Gal. 5:17) remain, which is another subject, but the new man is sealed by God with a seal of ownership or adoption. The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his (2 Tim. 2:19). He knows his own and the angels know them (Luke 15:10). If the seals of the Medes and Persians were respected and not to be tampered with, how much more the seal of God, the seal which bears his image![3] The sealing itself is neither metaphorical nor external. It is a sealing with the Holy Spirit of God. It is a stamping of the divine character upon the human personality. It is a fresh and indestructible communication to the believer of the image of God which was defaced through the fall (see Philip Hughes on 2 Cor. 3:18). We received the Spirit by hearing with faith (Col. 3:2) and by believing we received the seal or impress of the Spirit in our hearts—"believing ye were sealed" (Eph. 1:13).[4] Grieve not the Holy Spirit by whom you were sealed, says Paul (Eph. 4:30). In other words, do not act in a way which contradicts the nature of Christ with whose image you have been sealed.

There seems to be unnecessary division over this matter of the sealing. I said that sealing has to do with assurance. This is indicated in 2 Cor. 1:21, 22. "Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." Here the establishing or making firm of believers is in view and to this end the believer has received an enlightenment or anointing, a discernment to understand teaching, and having been sealed[5] has been given the Holy Spirit as the earnest or guarantee in his heart that he will come into his full inheritance in glory. The seal is an inward image of God upon the regenerate, not to be confused with "the earnest" who is the Holy Spirit himself, who bears witness to the believer that in fact he is a child of God and that, having been sealed with God's image, he continues always to have that seal or image.

This leads to the whole realm of subjective experience. As justification is always the basis of sanctification so the seal of God, witnessed to by the Holy Spirit, is the basis of assurance. Not what we have done but what *he* has done in uniting us to Christ is the ground of our assurance. Having sealed us the Holy Spirit bears direct witness to that sealing (Rom. 8:16, 1 John 4:13)—that is he assures us that we are made after

the image of Christ. If we understand sealing in this way then testimonies to sealing experiences make sense. If we take the view that some are sealed at regeneration when they believe and others in later experiences we will have two classes of Christians, sealed and not sealed, whereas in Ephesians chapter one the apostle is speaking of one class of Christian from first to last.

It is certainly true that some Christians have a full assurance of salvation (Heb. 6:11) and some do not, such assurance being something which all believers should be diligent to obtain. Subjective realisation of God's seal is stronger in some believers than others.

The Holy Spirit who is 'the earnest' or guarantee of our salvation pledges to us that we are in Christ and that we are children by adoption and that the promises are ours as well as the right to approach the throne of God with boldness (Heb. 4:14-16).

When Thomas Goodwin says we should sue God for the sealing of the Spirit is this right? Declares Goodwin: "There is a promise of the Holy Ghost to come and fill your hearts with joy unspeakable and glorious, to seal you up to the day of redemption. Sue this promise out, wait for it, rest not in believing only, rest not in assurances by graces only; there is a further assurance to be had".[6] That is a heartwarming, stirring exhortation and, provided it is understood in the sense of the Holy Spirit coming with power to confirm our sealing to us it is first rate, for this subject is essentially ongoing and experimental. The new birth is the watershed. A river of experience flows thereafter.

*Anointing.* Paul, in referring to the establishing action of God whereby believers are made firm, refers to anointing, sealing and the earnest of the Spirit. All believers are anointed, sealed and given the earnest of the Spirit (cf. footnotes 4 and 5).

How do these works of the Spirit minister toward the establishment of believers? The anointing is described by John as an enlightenment given to believers whereby they are enabled to discern the teachings of Christ in contrast to the doctrines of antichrist (1 John 2:20, 27 and 5:20). With regard to antichrists John is saying in effect that we do not need these vagrant heretics to teach us because we have an anointing which they do not have and by that anointing we are able to discern all things relative to the divinity of Christ and our salvation in him as the only Son of God manifested in the flesh. This applies to Jehovah's Witness and Mormon cults today. The true believer discerns the anti-Christ nature of their heresies.

*Filling.* John the Baptist, Elizabeth and Zacharias were all filled with the Spirit, John for the ministry and Elizabeth and Zacharias to prophesy. At Pentecost the disciples were all filled with the Holy Spirit as were later (Acts 4:31) Stephen and Barnabas, men 'full of the Holy Ghost'. Paul was filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:17 and 13:9). It

might be said that being filled with the Spirit results in the development of Christian character as a whole and glorifies God by producing a consistent Christian testimony. Thus in Ephesians 5:18 being filled with the Spirit is spoken of in the same context as submission to others, thankfulness and joyfulness expressed in the singing of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Obviously there is an ebb and flow in the believer's experience of the Spirit. Also the Holy Spirit fills believers for specific reasons such as enduing with power to preach, endurance to suffer, and so on.

The term "filled" is a general one denoting the heightening of a believer's experience, the raising of his understanding, the endearing of his affections, the empowering of his will and the warming of his perceptions enabling him to appreciate fellowship with fellow believers and giving him delight in the worship of God. The filling of the Spirit is common to all believers. It is not the prerogative of an élite few; nor does the filling of the Spirit depend on any former special experience.

Moreover the filling of the Spirit does not depend on possession of spiritual gifts. Some years ago Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones in lectures on biblical doctrine, distinguished between temporary gifts and permanent gifts. Apostleship, prophecy, healing (that is, direct, immediate healing), miracle-working, discerning of spirits and tongues (Acts 2 and 1 Cor. 2:12-14) he designated as temporary. The word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, teaching, helps and administration, evangelism, the pastorate and faith he designated as permanent. Some might wish to change this arrangement a little but it certainly helps to distinguish between that which was extraordinary and temporary and that which is ordinary and permanent.

More recently Dr. Lloyd-Jones has expressed views contrary to the cessation of extraordinary spiritual gifts.

With the advent of the modern Charismatic movement pressure has been applied to make believers accept that all the gifts continue. But this was never the view of the Church as a whole in former times. One example is found in the Association records of Particular Baptists as long ago as 1656 in which a precise distinction was made as to what ceased with the apostles, namely, apostles, prophets, evangelists, gifts of healing, diversities of tongues, and what continued; namely, pastors, teachers, helps or those who rule, these three called elders whose joint office is to care for the church. Thereafter follows a list of duties including visiting the sick according to James 5:14. It is said that it is hard to prove that the gifts ceased. The matter has to receive theological and historical assessment. For instance, prophecy was judged as immeasurably superior to tongues. Prophecies were to be judged (1 Cor. 14:29). Judged by what? What better than Scripture! With the coming of the completed Scripture what place is there for prophecy apart from foretelling of events of which there are only two examples in Acts, *i.e.* 11:27-30, 21:11-14. The principle

inherent in Rev. 22:18, 19 must be born in mind with regard to prophecy. Now a man may be filled with the Spirit for the exercise of his gift of deaconing as were the deacons of Acts 6. Basically, however, being filled with the Spirit is the privilege of every Christian.

How are we to explain the case of miserable believers who by their own admission are not so filled and who may claim that they have never been filled with the Spirit? There are several explanations. One is that of temperament. Another is a lack of teaching. Yet another is a neglect of the means of grace. Yet another is grieving the Spirit.

What are we to say to those who claim that they were poor Christians until the Charismatic movement came, by which they had a special experience? The answer to this is that the Holy Spirit is sovereign and can use whatever means he pleases to revive Christians. Not every experience is genuine and some could be described as a mixed blessing. Fruit by way of truth and godly living over a period of time is required. Scripture shows no set formula for a special experience. Most are conformed to Christ gradually without sensational or spectacular experiences.

Some believers can look back to a marked improvement in their experience as a whole which came through a painful crisis in their lives when God spoke to them and when they cast away sloth and began to devote themselves with zeal to the means of grace. Others can trace a turning point to edification received through biblical ministry. Many testify that they owe more to a heart experience and understanding of the doctrines of grace through expository preaching than to any other means in bringing them to a profound and permanent assurance, boldness, understanding and practice of the Christian faith.

We have been speaking of individuals. What about churches? Churches as a whole can decline into a lukewarm condition like the church of Laodicea. On the other hand a church or churches can be in a healthy state being edified by the Holy Spirit, which brings us to consider Pentecost and the baptism of the Church with the Holy Spirit.

*3. In baptising the Church*

When John the Baptist declared that he baptised with water unto repentance, but one was coming after him who would baptise with the Holy Ghost and fire he was pointing to the exaltation and Godhead of Jesus Christ. As God he would send the Holy Spirit into the world in a new way. The fulfilment at Pentecost of John's prediction marked the birthday of the Spirit into the world just as Jesus' birth at Bethlehem marked Jesus' birth into the world. This is not to say that our Lord and the Holy Spirit were not both active in Old Testament times. By offering sacrifices on God's altar the Old Testament believers showed their faith in the Saviour to come. They too were regenerated by the Spirit and justified by faith but the coming of Jesus and of the Spirit ushered in a new age of power and clarity which overshadowed the age of preparation, not only in the

advantages afforded to individual disciples by way of clarity in the truth, but also in the extent of the mission of the Spirit. This was not now confined to one small nation but was to be manifested on a global scale.

It can be argued that the baptism of the Holy Ghost referred to by John is different from regeneration or the baptism of believers into Christ referred to by Paul in 1 Cor. 12:13. In the first instance he, Christ, is the baptiser. He is active. He baptises. In the second he is passive. Believers are baptised into him as the head and into his Church which is his body. For we are the Father's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works (Eph. 2:10). We must not overlook the fact that Pentecost was also the work of the Father since it was "the promise of the Father", but due note ought to be made when Scripture emphasises a particular rôle in the Godhead. "I will send him," said our Lord (John 16:7). Christ's rôle is active in baptising with the Spirit.

The disciples at Pentecost had been regenerated at an earlier time and showed the marks of the new nature by confessing Christ to be the Son of God (Matt. 16:16, 17). They had received the power of the Spirit for the teaching and healing ministry (Luke 19:1-16) and were specially endued with the Holy Spirit before Pentecost when our Lord had breathed upon them (John 20:22).

What then was Pentecost? As already asserted, it was the birthday of the Spirit. But it was also the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy predicting the winding up of the old age and the ushering in of the new (Acts 2:19, 20). The speaking in other languages pointed to the fact that all barriers, linguistic and national, were to be broken down, male and female, bond and free, Jew and Gentile—all were now one by faith in Christ Jesus. Unity and blessing (Gen. 12:3) in the anointed Messiah was expressed whereas Babel was an expression of judgment, the human race thereby being fragmented by confusion and disunity.

Christ being exalted to the right hand of God and having made the promise that he would give the Holy Spirit then demonstrated his exalted power by that which was seen and heard at Pentecost. This proof of Christ's exaltation and reign at the Father's right hand was not confined to Pentecost. There are six references to Christ being the baptiser with the Holy Spirit, one in each Gospel and Acts 1:5 and 11:16, "Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptised with water; but ye shall be baptised with the Holy Ghost". These words of Peter are of particular significance because the apostles saw in the work of the Spirit at Caesarea the continued result of Christ's reign. Having poured out the Spirit at Jerusalem and at Samaria, which was the first threshold to be crossed from the Jewish to the non-Jewish world, our Lord now poured out his Spirit upon Gentiles who were aliens and strangers to the privileges of Israel. In other words if these Gentiles are accepted into the fold then the middle wall of partition dividing Jews from Gentiles would be broken down once and for all.

The reception of the Spirit by Cornelius and his household was visible as it was in the four instances narrated by Luke in Acts, beginning, as our Lord intimated, at Jerusalem, but also at Samaria (Acts 8), Caesarea (Acts 10 and 11), and Ephesus (Acts 19). Ephesus was the centre from which all Asia Minor was evangelised (Acts 19:10). By pouring out his Spirit our Lord was authenticating the preaching of the Gospel to the ends of the earth. But why did this happen in a visible way in these four instances and not in others? When we say in a visible way we refer particularly to the Holy Spirit "falling upon" believers (Acts 8:16, 10:44). In falling upon these groups a visible and audible proof was given of the reception of the Spirit. This visible evidence was under these circumstances a necessity. The resurrection and living power of our Lord was proved by the events of Pentecost. The inclusion of the Samaritans who for centuries had been estranged and separated, was also visibly proved thus overcoming a breach or schism which would have proved disastrous to the united testimony of the early Christian Church. Likewise when it came to the inclusion of Gentiles such as the Roman centurion Cornelius and his household, Peter used as his crowning, irrefutable argument the fact that the Gentiles had received the Holy Spirit. This was at the first great Christian Council at Jerusalem (Acts 15). "And God which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us" (Acts 15:8). Peter's conclusion ought to be well noted, "and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith". Peter's deductions are clear, 1. The reception of the Holy Spirit proves the inclusion of the Gentiles. 2. The great work of the Holy Spirit is to purify our hearts by faith.

Likewise at Ephesus the Holy Spirit fell upon the group of twelve disciples. Paul's question is a question we could ask any nominal Christian: believing, did you receive the Holy Ghost? (see footnote 4). The answer to this question by nominal Christians would be similar. We have not heard of the Holy Spirit, or we do not know what you mean when you talk about receiving the Holy Spirit! Ask an evangelical Christian and he answers: "When I was immersed in water in Christian baptism it demonstrated publicly the reality of my experience of unity with Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It was by the Holy Spirit that I believed in Christ to salvation and by the Holy Spirit that I have persevered in union with the Trinity ever since". Note how Paul instructed the twelve concerning basic truth. We only have a brief synopsis of this (Acts 19:4). Having taught them he baptised them which indicates that they had not been Christians before Paul came. They were living in the inter-testamental period and it is important to remember this in interpreting Acts 19. When Paul laid hands on them the Holy Ghost came upon them, and an audible confirmation of their inclusion by the Spirit in the body of Christ was given.

The obvious question is, why should we not all enjoy this visible and audible confirmation of our having the Spirit? The answer is that the

apostolic testimony was unique and extraordinary, yet even with the apostles we find that outside the four groupings (at Jerusalem, Samaria, Caesarea and Ephesus) this confirmation was not given. At least it is not reported. If this was to be the inviolable pattern for individuals it certainly would have been indicated in Scripture. Nothing of a similar nature is reported for the three thousand converts in Jerusalem, the Ethiopian Eunuch, Paul, the households of Lydia and the Philippian gaoler, of Crispus or the Corinthian converts. Moreover it is an accepted axiom in formulating Christian doctrine that we base our teaching on the clear statements in the epistles rather than on the narratives in Acts which report those events peculiar to a time which was unique inasmuch as it was the time of transition from the Old Covenant to the New.

Chrysostom (345-407) referred to the cessation of the Charismata and Augustine, speaking of the Holy Ghost falling upon them that believed, declared, "these were signs adapted to the time. For there behoved to be that betokening of the Holy Spirit in all tongues, to show that the Gospel of God was to run through all tongues over the whole earth. That thing was done for a betokening and it passed away".

The signs have passed away because that which was indicated by the signs, namely the inclusion of all Gentile nations in the Church, is no longer under dispute. But has the power passed away? Our Lord said that all power was given to him in heaven and in the earth and on that basis of confidence the world was to be evangelised by us to the end of the age. Did our Lord exercise that power only in the apostolic times or does he baptise in the overwhelming sense now with fire and the Holy Ghost? And what does he mean by fire?

A criticism that can apply to books on this subject by a variety of authors such as Stott, Hoekema, Chantry, Kuiper, Bruner, Dunn and Parnell (7) is that while they are most painstakingly careful and informative they lack vitality and power. We are much indebted to these writers for the thinking and analysis that they have brought to the subject to the advantage of us all but surely a book on the Holy Spirit should inspire readers with enthusiasm and give you a consuming passion to labour on in the evangelisation of all the world! George Smeaton's book on the Spirit is much more positive and Buchanan has a whole chapter on revivals. Winslow and C. R. Vaughan are warm-hearted and experimental but Winslow is poor on exegesis while Vaughan, though wonderfully useful, is by no means robust on exegesis. Bruner, while giving an invaluable history of the Pentecostal movement and also providing an excellent overview of the four central passages in Acts, nevertheless speaks like a Roman Catholic Sacramentalist (see p. 263). Dunn is careful and scholarly as to details but has no theology of revival. His big doubt about the validity of infant baptism is quite daring for him. The sum total of his thesis is well summed up as follows:

Faith demands baptism as its expression;
Baptism demands faith for its validity.
The gift of the Spirit presupposes faith as its condition;
Faith is shown to be genuine only by the gift of the Spirit (p. 228).

Dunn takes baptism with fire to point to purification (p. 13) as does Gaffin in his lectures at Westminster Seminary. But surely a definition of what it is to be baptised with fire cannot be confined to purification. "You shall receive power" (not purification), said our Lord, "after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." The concept of fire and of fiery tongues rests more naturally with the idea of power than with purification. In commenting upon Matthew 3:11 Hendriksen in speaking of the baptism with fire describes power at Pentecost as an "unprecedented illumination" and, "wills strengthened, like never before with contagious animation (Acts 4:13, 19, 20, 33)." Surely the tongues of fire resting upon each disciple indicated tongues loosed to fulfil the saying of Joel, "your sons and your daughters shall prophesy". A fiery eloquence followed which was seen in Peter's preaching. Unquenchable zeal and holy boldness were in evidence.

Let us remember that the unmatched power of God to convert souls lies not in miracles but comes through preaching. There is no reason for the unique signs which attested the uniqueness of Pentecost to be repeated, but there is every reason to expect the same power then manifested through preaching to be repeated over and over again to the end of time. Think of John Livingstone preaching at Kirk of Shotts in 1630 when 500 were converted. Think of the Great Awakening the following century and the preaching of George Whitefield and others. Think of the revivals of the last century when tens of thousands were turned to God. The fire and the power came down from heaven and can come again whenever the Lord, who has all power, wills it.

What is our experience as preachers of the Word today? Are we producing dry lectures or homilies? Do we feel passionately about the Gospels? Do we have fiery zeal in our preaching? Do we experience the power of God in our praying, in our preparation, in our evangelism and in our pulpits? Are we filled with the Spirit and with power?

The difficulty when we come to application today is that the term "the baptism of the Spirit" has come through much misuse to refer in its general usage to individuals in whom a subjective experience has been induced. One is reluctant therefore to use it. It may be significant that the expression is never used of individuals in the New Testament. It is applied to the four groups only from the one hundred and twenty in the upper room to the twelve at Ephesus in which the Holy Spirit fell upon all inclusively and unconditionally, *i.e.* the Holy Spirit came in a sovereign way not dependent upon special prior conditions being met. Hence my heading, "baptising the church". But Christ, said John, will baptise

you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. This was a reference to the first revival and to other awakenings which follow such as that at Caesarea. My conclusion therefore is that we need to give much more attention to the theology of revival.

It would seem that the Church is beginning to extricate herself from the quagmire of confusion into which the modern Charismatic movement has brought her. That historically, I believe, will prove important. But of infinitely greater importance is the positive side.

Our Lord was anointed with the Spirit in a unique way at the time of his water baptism in which he identified himself with all those sinners he was to save throughout history. Having vicariously suffered in their place in a baptism of agony, his atonement has received the approval of the Father who now sends forth the Spirit to unite the redeemed to his Son. To our Lord all power has been given. He has only to ask for the heathen for his inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession (Psa. 2:8). The whole earth is destined to be filled with a knowledge of him as the waters cover the sea (Isa. 11:9). How will this be? The answer is that he will reign in the application of his finished work until his enemies become his footstool (Psa. 110:1, Heb. 10:12-17). How will he carry on his work of applying redemption? The answer is that the Father will send forth the rod of his strength out of Zion, that is, a divine energy into the Church and from the Church out into the world. Christ the deliverer will come to Zion. He will turn ungodliness away from Jacob (Rom. 11).

At Pentecost the Father and the Son began to send forth the Holy Spirit and in every subsequent spiritual awakening or revival the Spirit has come in power. As far as writers are concerned Jonathan Edwards has probably more help to give than any other on the theology of revival.

Theologians like Edwards are a gift to the Church (Eph. 4) but let us look beyond men to the great giver of power, even to our Lord, and pray that he will send another great awakening. If he does we can be sure that the main result will be the preaching of the Gospel with great clarity, power and conviction to the saving of multitudes of sinners.

[1] Alexander Carson devotes 168 pages to this subject in his book, *Baptism, its mode and subjects.* See also, *The meaning and use of Baptizein philologically and historically investigated,* by T. J. Conant, 1860.

[2] C. W. Parnell (*Understanding tongues speaking,* Lakeland, 121 pages) like John Stott (*The Baptism and fulness of the Holy Spirit,* 40 pages, cf. p. 15 ff.) gets into a muddle because of the Greek preposition *en* (in) which is used in all seven New Testament references; Matt. 3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16, John 1:33, Acts 1:5, Acts 11:16 and 1 Cor. 12:13. Baptised *in* the Holy Spirit. "The Holy Spirit is never the baptiser," says Parnell. But this statement is very confusing and unhelpful because it would convey the idea that since we are baptised *in* the Spirit, we cannot be baptised *by* or *with* the Spirit. Christ certainly is the baptiser. He sends the Spirit *in* whom and *by* whom we are baptised. The Spirit is exceedingly active as the outward visible symbols of Pentecost indicate; wind, fire and languages. And what was the Spirit doing if he did not come actively upon Christ at his bap-

tism, not with fire but in the form of a dove? In regeneration (1 Cor. 12:13) the Holy Ghost comes like the wind of creation to do a mighty thing to baptise us into union with Christ. The Spirit *is* the immediate agent in Spirit baptism! The preposition "en" is used of time and place in the New Testament and is connected with agency, i.e. "*with* (en) a rod" 1 Cor. 4:21, cf. Arndt and Gingrich. The *en* must be governed by, and be interpreted within a contextual and doctrinal framework. The servant in his room is ruled by the master in his palace, not the master by the servant. Hence it is quite in order to speak of baptism by or with the Holy Spirit.

[3] Some deny that the seal spoken of in 2 Tim. 2:19 is the same as that in Eph. 1:13 saying that the seal of 2 Tim. 2:19 refers to God's covenant designs. Nevertheless it cannot be denied that God's covenant designs eventuate in the elect receiving the sealing of the Spirit as a consequence of regeneration and thereafter bearing the image of Christ in their persons.

[4] "Believing ye were sealed." We have here an aorist participle with an aorist verb. An aorist participle sometimes expresses antecedent action but not in every case. The context indicates when we should take the two verbs as the two sides of one event: it was when they believed that God sealed them with the Spirit, as in Galatians 3:2, "received ye the Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing with faith?" The step of faith is met by the gift of the Spirit. See Dunn, p. 159, and for Greek construction Burton, *Moods and Tenses,* p. 61.
An example of this is Luke's use of the aorist participle with the aorist verb denoting coincidental events, "believing received ye the Holy Spirit?" ἐλαβετε πιστευσαντες (Acts 19:2).

[5] In 2 Cor. 1:22, 23, "the establishing" is in the present tense, and the anointing, sealing and giving of the earnest in the past tense.
Three aorist participles are used. It could be argued that if my thesis is right then the perfect tense would have been used as the perfect tense points to continuing effects of a past action. My reply to that is that as in Romans 6:3, 4 the apostle places the emphasis on the *finished work of God* as the basis of *all* our experience.

[6] Goodwin. *Works,* Vol. 1, p. 248.

[7] From an all round point of view John Owen (*Works,* Vol. 3) and Thomas Goodwin (*Works,* Vol. 6) still provide the most useful, comprehensive teaching on the person and work of the Holy Spirit. William E. Biederwolf's *A Help to the Study of the Holy Spirit* is the finest of the small volumes. Bakers of Grand Rapids, Michigan are the publishers.

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# Reviews

## Jonathan Edwards and Revival

The recent publication in two large volumes of the Works of Jonathan Edwards[1] constitute one of the best accomplishments of the Banner of Truth, ranking with the republication of the complete Works of John Owen (16 volumes) and John Flavel (6 volumes) as well as Poole's Commentary on the whole Bible (3 large volumes). Edwards experienced two revivals in his ministry (his grandfather who preceded him at Northampton in his fifty-five year ministry experienced five!). These two awakenings took place in 1735 and the other under Whitefield preaching in 1740 had a profound influence upon Edwards which is reflected in his written works. It may be helpful to mention some of the writings by Edwards which reflect this influence and which also have been used to strengthen belief in the reality of spiritual awakenings. Vol. 1 of the republished works begins with the memoirs of Edwards in which the

[1] Vol. 1, 982 pages (size 10″ × 7″) at £4·50. Ditto Vol. 2. The print in the double column pages is small but with the value of the material in mind this is of little consequence.

revival in 1734-35 is described in detail. This description has sometimes been referred to as "The Narrative of Surprising Conversions". The extent of the revival which began in 1740 and which continued to 1742 is also described. With substantial reason many regard Edwards' greatest work to be "A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections". Here the differences between true and false affections are analysed. As far as we know the insight evidenced in this study has never been bettered.

Edwards defended the genuine nature of the revivals in New England and published separate works with the titles, "Narrative of Surprising Conversions" and "Thoughts on the Revival of Religion in New England".

Edwards believed that there would be revivals to the end of time and herein we have the very core of his theology of revival. The victory that Christ has obtained over his enemies will eventuate in their overthrow and the defeat of anti-Christ as the powers of evil represented in massive false systems such as Mohammedanism. He also believed that Jewish infidelity will be overthrown and that the veil which at present blinds the eyes of the natural descendants of Abraham will be removed. The national conversion of the Jews he regarded as a certainty basing this conviction on Romans, chapter 11. The latter-day glory he believed would be "unspeakably great". "A time shall come," he declared, "wherein religion and true Christianity shall in every respect be *uppermost* (his italics) in the world" (Vol. 2, p. 287).

The second volume consists mostly of Edwards' published sermons. A leading feature is the awakening character of these sermons, the titles of which reflect the burden of the preacher to awaken souls out of Satan's dominion, "Future punishment of the wicked" and "Wrath upon the wicked to the uttermost" and the famous sermon, "Sinners in the hands of an angry God". Other expositions along these lines were, "Natural men in a dreadful condition" and "God makes men sensible of His mercy before He reveals His mercy and love".

One of the results of revival was the awakening of hypocrites out of their self-deceived condition. Expository headings reflecting the purpose of the preacher so to awaken hypocrites are, "Who are sinners in Zion?", "Why hypocrites will be surprised" and "The vain self-flatteries of the sinner".

A substantial part of the second volume is devoted to the life and diary of David Brainerd which includes a description of the rise and progress of a revival under Brainerd's ministry at Delaware.

Not included in the two large republished volumes is "Charity and its Fruits", the manuscript for this having been discovered at a later date. It was reprinted by the Banner in a 368-page volume which is now out of print. In this volume Edwards is at pains to show that "the ordinary influence of the Spirit of God, working the grace of charity in the heart, is a far more excellent privilege than any of the extraordinary gifts".

Extraordinary, miraculous gifts he regarded as temporary and reasoned that if "saving grace is more excellent than the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, then we cannot conclude, from what the Scripture says of the glory of the latter times of the Church, that the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit will be granted to men in those times," and "the glory of those times of the Church does not require any such thing as those extraordinary gifts. Those times may be far the most gracious times of the Church that have ever been, without them". Love he regarded to be the supreme thing which makes the Church on earth like the Church in heaven where love does reign. On this account we have no reason to expect that the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit will be poured out in the future for there is no new

dispensation to be introduced and no new Bible to be given.

Predominant features have in this review been adverted to but by way of conclusion the whole content of Edwards' ministry is recommended as balanced, comprehensive and spiritually edifying.

## The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church[1]

*A review by John A. Coleman, of Melbourne, Australia.*

The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church is significant inasmuch as it provides an up-to-date and very comprehensive source of knowledge. For instance, someone may telephone and ask who Christadelphians are and what they believe? The relevant facts are to hand in a precise and helpful way on that and a host of other subjects related to the Christian Church. Because it is a work of significance we ought to take particular note of the overall approach. Take the central issue of the atonement as an example. Leon Morris has contributed an article which describes three groups of theories on the atonement. He leaves it at that, which is most unsatisfactory because the reader is left in the air.

By contrast the *Encyclopedia of Christianity*[2] provides an exposition on the subject by Professor John Murray which is of priceless value. His object is to expound the atonement in a biblical manner. He succeeds admirably, the reader being left in no doubt as to what the atonement means which is a far cry from a little summary about views most of which are erroneous and confusing. The Encyclopedia just referred to has the advantage of being five times the size of the New Dictionary but the basic approach throughout is in the Reformed tradition whereas that of the Dictionary is *new evangelical*—"this is the truth" declares one, "these are the views, take your choice", says another.

John Coleman's comments which first appeared in an Australian paper are very fair since the value of the dictionary is commended on the one hand while we are alerted to the deficiencies on the other. He says:

The claim on the dust-cover informs us that it is "an entirely fresh and original work designed to make available in reasonable compass the salient facts about the Christian Church during the nearly 20 centuries of its life". To achieve this there are some 5,000 articles by 182 writers in 1,074 pages. (I wonder why the publishers repeatedly claim, "nearly 1,200 pages"? "Over 1,000 pages" would have expressed the size with greater accuracy.) Beyond all question this work covers a wide range of subjects. Should you ever wish to know about Agathangelus, Ercole Consalvi, Ephraim the Syrian, The Little Labyrinth, Pammachius, Sarabaites, or Ursulines, here is the book. It would seem that, no matter how obscure the person, movement or incident, there is a good chance this book will not only help you but will also provide guidance for further reading. This is a good feature for a work of this nature.

There are informative articles on such subjects as Arianism, The Marrow Controversy, The Covenanters, and Erastianism. Biographical sketches abound—Augustine, Luther, Calvin, the Wesley brothers, Finney, Moody and Spurgeon, not to pursue the list any further.

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[1] Published by Paternoster Press. 1073 pages (double column) at £10.

[2] Four volumes of the Encyclopedia (double column) have so far been published, taking readers up to the letter "G". There have been three general editors so far: Palmer (Vol. 1, 622 pp.), Cohen (Vol. 2, 502 pp.) and Philip Hughes (Vol 3, 487 pp., Vol. 4, 429 pp.). The standard of writing is very high. Jay Green is the managing editor. Another twelve volumes will be needed to complete the set.

*Useful Reference Work*

Many of the subjects are dealt with by men who are experts in their field —*i.e.*, Methodism by Skevington Wood, the Atonement by Leon Morris, Plymouth Brethren (I wonder why they used the older designation rather than the current "Christian Brethren"?) by G. C. D. Howley, The Bible by F. F. Bruce, and Roman Catholicism by H. M. Carson. These, and many articles, are of a very high standard and will ensure that this volume will prove a useful reference work for several years to come.

*Some Articles Disappoint*

When this book first came to my hands I was tremendously thrilled. Having made a fairly extensive survey I am still pleased to have it, *but* I have found it of unequal value. Whilst some men have written excellent articles, others have submitted articles which, in my estimation, are not of a standard one would expect in such a work.

For instance, on page 1031 Arthur Pollard writes on Isaac Watts. The most commendable feature of the article is its brevity! Yet, in the space of 400 words Pollard does nothing to convey the true greatness of Watts to the reader, and completely ignores Watts' right to the title: "The Father of Modern Hymnody".

If Pollard's article on Watts is compared with that on Charles Wesley by Skevington Wood, no one would ever conclude that Watts vies with Wesley in his fame as a hymn writer. Bernard Manning's estimation of Watts has long been available: "To Watts more than to any other man is due the triumphs of the hymn in English worship. All later hymn writers, even when they excel him, are his debtors: and it is possible to hold that his work for hymns is greater than Charles Wesley's." Not a word about this is given by Pollard. Pollard also misrepresents Watts' theological outlook on Calvinism.

Arthur Pollard also has written on George Whitefield. In this he makes no reference to either Gillies' work of 1772, or Arnold Dallimore's book published by Banner of Truth in 1970. The blunt truth is that Pollard has not done justice to either Watts or Whitefield.

*Omissions and Inclusions*

My next complaint relates to irrelevant articles, omissions and inclusions.

This book is called a "Dictionary of the *Christian* Church". However, the article on Abraham Lincoln makes no reference to religion until the last line, when we are told that he epitomised the nation's ideals of "churchless religion"! The article on Booker T. Washington contains no reference to either his Christian faith or lack of it. In these two instances (and there are others of the same kind) either the book has the wrong title, or the writer has the wrong angle.

A stalwart for the faith such as J. G. Machen is given only 300 words, and in that there is little indication of his true greatness. A. W. Tozer was widely recognised as "A Twentieth Century Prophet", yet his name is missing! Of the many other men one would expect to find in a work of this nature I mention only Robert Dick Wilson, Oswald T. Allis, Marvin Vincent, John A. Broadus and G. C. Berkouwer. Why is this? The name of Eugene Carson Blake is included—is it possible that the men responsible for this publication regard Blake as being more important in the history of the church than men like Tozer, Wilson, Allis, Vincent and Berkouwer? These omissions may indicate a theological predilection!

Of the biographical sketches only a few relate to men still living, *e.g.* Billy Graham, A. M. Ramsay (the recently retired Archbishop of Canterbury) and Eugene Carson Blake. There is not a single word to indicate the liberal theology espoused by those last two.

One can only wonder concerning the basis on which these choices were made. If they were made on the basis

of the contribution made to Christian thought and life, why is there no mention of Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, or of Dr. Francis Schaeffer, or Dr. Cornelius Van Til? Does one detect a preference for men who have not held to a strongly evangelical or reformed persuasion? I fear it looks that way.

*Frequent Failure to Give Objective Assessment*

My greatest disappointment in this book is that it so frequently fails to give an objective assessment. To be specific, on pages 758-9 one finds an article on A. S. Peake, but there is no word about his influence in the spread of a liberal theology, and no word of criticism concerning his One Volume Commentary on the Bible and the immense harm it effected. Secondly, there is an article on Emmanuel Swedenborg, but no criticism of his heretical beliefs. Thirdly, in an article on Joseph Smith (founder of the Mormons) we read: "He experienced conversion". We know that "conversion" is a word capable of a number of applications, but here it is used in a "Dictionary of the *Christian* Church". Now in *Christian* usage "conversion" is synonymous with a salvation experience, or the "new birth". We reject any suggestion that Joseph Smith had such, and therefore regard this use of the word "conversion" as both careless and misleading. Imagine a new Christian turning to this article on Joseph Smith and reading of his "conversion". The natural conclusion would be that Smith was a true believer, a man who was "born again"! Unfortunately this is not the only instance of terminology which is both careless and misleading, and therefore culpable. These things turn this book into a patchwork quilt comprised of materials of varying qualities and colours.

Victor Pearce writes on "Evolution", but his article amounts to no more than a superficial recital of its history and development. Should anyone refer to this article seeking a Christian approach to the subject he would not find one line of help. One is forced to ask the question: why was Victor Pearce allocated this article? Whilst he is well qualified to write as an anthropologist, yet his book, "Who Was Adam?" adopts a system which is quite untenable to many in the light of Scripture, quite apart from any alternative conclusion which may be reached on the basis of anthropological studies. I am prepared to believe that R. E. D. Clark would have provided us with a very different approach to the subject of evolution.

*A Tendency Towards Neutrality*

In such matters we must regard the book's neutrality and relativism as dangerous. Perhaps the intention was to provide a book without bias. The result is that in many places there is a bias in the wrong direction, and on controversial issues there is often a failure to present the conservative evangelical Christian position. The result reflects neo-evangelicalism.

*Summary*

A book of immense breadth, much scholarship and undoubted value. Yet, like the curate's egg it is only "good in parts". A work of this nature ought to be not only informative but, where necessary, objectively informative. This book fails most when it fails to indicate the theological positions held by some of the men who were considered worthy of inclusion.

Valuable as this work is, that value is marred by what appears to be a deliberate decision to be largely uncritical. We live at a point of time when guidance is needed concerning the heart of the Christian faith. In many instances that is done in this book, but in some significant instances there is silence. This reflects a trend which has penetrated much of evangelical life, but which we are forced to regard as extremely dangerous.

This is a comparatively costly book, but it is not too costly. The price is equal only to that of a few paperback novels. Therefore, if you can, buy it, but remember the warning notes.

J.A.C.

*Rod Badams, whom we welcome to the magazine for the first time, is a journalist working for a well-known evening newspaper in the south of England. We are grateful to him for his analysis of an area which we are uneasy about, but sometimes uncertain of, for lack of the very knowledge he provides. The criticism he makes of popular evangelical magazines is deserved. They are like Madam Tussaud's with all the names removed. As the visitor enters he asks which is Napoleon and which Wellington? Replies the curator: it's all the same so please yourself. You pays your money and you takes your choice! Please note the editorial comment with regard to the views expressed about the Festival of Light.*

# The Evangelical Sub-Culture

PERHAPS ONE OF THE GREATEST TRAGEDIES OF THE PRESENT DAY IS THAT supposed men of God have become conditioned by the prevailing habits of the world. Instead of sounding a clear trumpet note in their biblical teaching, many have been overwhelmed by the general clamour for more instant experience than the steadfast ministry of the Word can give them. Thus the message from many pulpits is mixed and confused, and pastors are being shepherded, aimlessly, by their people.

The absence of a decisive biblical ministry has allowed the growth of a widespread sub-culture, in principle rather like the drug culture, but with an essence which is "spiritual" rather than pharmaceutical. Though its seeds must have existed much earlier, the Christian folk sub-culture can be traced in detail through the past four years. Like drug dependency, which begins with the occasional soft drug and leads to the hard stuff, so the evangelical sub-culture has developed from its origin in a rebellious frustration to the present excursions into self-created "movements of God" fantasies and growing abandonment of the discipline required by the Word of God.

This movement has made sweeping gains within several denominations, and is particularly rife in Britain among Baptists and Anglicans. Its very dominance has been one of the main causes of its growth. More and more people have given in to it as their friends and even their ministers have responded to its pragmatic claim, the essence of which is seen in the question asked, namely, "is it successful?", rather than "is it right?".

We are surrounded by those who, put in Elijah's position, would have applauded the priests of Baal for their remarkable unity of purpose. Why is this? I hope we shall find out as we explore this subject.

*Origins*

There can be no doubt that the rise of this cult phenomenon, and its subsequent acceleration, was due to gaping inadequacies in the teaching of the churches. In July 1971 a movement known as the Nationwide Festival of Light was first publicised. Its activities included rallies in Trafalgar Square and Hyde Park in one Saturday of that year. About 60,000 people attended these rallies, most of whom were from evangelical churches, and most of whom were young.

The origins of the Festival of Light are interesting. It is important to note that though it began as a demonstration against moral pollution and degradation in this country, and a stand for love and family life, it in fact became something quite different. It became a massive jamboree supported by people of various shades of Christian belief and some of no Christian belief at all. In his book *And there was Light* John Capon describes the "friendly tension" that existed between the faction which saw the Festival as a campaign of social involvement and that which preferred the evangelistic thrust. He tells of the uncertainty that existed about which was the prior aim. This uncertainty left the gate open for the Festival to become what the publisher's note to Mr. Capon's book says: "Britain's biggest religious happening in recent years". I would call it an ambitious, enormous, grandiose nothing!

Indeed, the spiritual discernment of the Christian people who were deeply involved in such a demonstration gives cause for concern. There can be no doubt about their enthusiasm, but where there should have been discernment there was dangerous naïvety. It marked a trend in which churches unthinkingly support all kinds of strident events and movements on the milky basis that God must surely approve of good ideas especially if promoted by well-meaning and sincere men.

As a consequence there has been an increasing tendency to look for this type of "external" event as the high spot on the Christian calendar which in turn has weakened the desire for, and practice of, a biblical and doctrinal faith and order.

After the traumas of the Festival of Light each succeeding year has brought its visionary innovation designed to capture the imagination of the young and the growing number of camp followers. In 1972 it was a crop of provincial "Festivals for Jesus" throughout Britain whose aim was to foster the spirit of the previous year's exploits and to maintain the momentum for action which had been generated. John Capon again, in 1972: "Future activities include an extensive programme of local

activities with teams of Christians speaking up and down the country teaching the aims of the Festival, culminating in a series of Gospel Festivals."

In 1973 SPREE came on the British scene, heralded by an unrivalled fanfare of propaganda. Young people were urged to enrol for a week's training course in London in a programme which included Campus Crusade instruction in witnessing, holding rallies, Pop concerts, counselling and the like. To illustrate the commercial aspect of this operation, societies or organisations which enrolled a certain number of young people were given free exhibition space, 100 sq. feet for 30 bookings.

*Later developments*

The Evangelical Alliance (EA) took up the running in 1974/75 with its POWER campaign. Rev. John Bird director of POWER, and a leading personality in modern evangelicalism, writing to churches, urged them all to take part in a "Day of Jesus Power" at Easter 1975. This could consist of a march of witness, a demonstration, or an indoor or outdoor rally.

Power Packs III and IV were available to help ministers plan their "structure and strategy" and the period between Christmas 1974 and Easter 1975 was to be the period of "maximum power".

Thus the sub-culture, which began with individuals, has taken hold not only of local churches, but of whole groups within denominations, and in many ways of the entire movement of organised evangelicalism. It is doubtful if the EA would have embarked on POWER had it not been for the precedent set by the Festival of Light and SPREE. If this is true, it shows that the mainstream of evangelical activity today is self-motivated. It would be wrong to think of the EA as pioneering this false trail. It has simply jumped on the bandwagon to maintain credibility with member churches already caught up in the new approach. In the same way local churches adjust to reflect the feelings of their own cult elements, and likewise these elements are fed from the source of the sub-culture which is outside the organised church altogether. It is interesting that the Festival of Light won no official support from any denomination. The source is in fact a number of "folk-heroes" who have been given, or have taken, positions of power, authority, prestige and influence among cult followers. In the south of England Dennis Clarke, of Worthing, Gerald Coates, Barney Coombes, of Basingstoke, and Peter Hill, who founded the Festival of Light, are key figures.

All this activity is sustained by a bush telegraph; a verbal publicity, which is immeasurable and untrackable. In the south-east of England the movement is fostered by such regular events as a Bible week held at Capel, near Dorking in Surrey, each year, and another at Ashburnam in

Sussex. Dennis Clarke is involved with these, and with "Intercessors for Britain".

The creed of the movement is assumed rather than spelt out. The folk-heroes tend to be engaging people, full of calculating humour, who do not expound Scripture but use it for illustration. I heard one adherent trace from the narrative of Gideon characteristics of the Holy Spirit. This approach is like the puzzle in a child's comic which asks how many faces you can find in the wood!

Persuasion of Christians in churches to draw them in to the cult is taking place on a wide scale. Special meetings are held, often not publicly announced, to which the "converted" take the "unconverted". The under-cover way in which this is done, and the expectation that the underground groups will "take over" reminds me of an incident some years ago when the members of a trade union branch sent a donation of a little over £4 to the leaders of miners who were on strike in Kent. A dramatic reply came back acknowledging the princely sum: "Brothers, we shall remember your solidarity when the great day comes!"

But despite the emphasis on the quiet infiltration, the flamboyant act still continues. The most recent product has been the rash of performances of a new type of musical meeting known as "Come Together". Depending for their success on mass hypnosis, these meetings have multiplied during 1974. They combine instant evangelism with unbiblical, thoughtless and undemanding worship. Jimmy and Carol Owens, the authors of "Come Together", claim that worship lacks quality unless it is accompanied by the "liberty" of physical expressions. Likewise love is not love unless expressed verbally or physically. "Come Together" is now being replaced by a new musical known as "If my people . . ." which no doubt will be replaced by some equally mind-consuming diversion. These occasions are clan gatherings along the same lines as pop festivals.

*The Christian press*

The growth of the sub-culture has been both influenced and furthered by the Christian press and by the publication of a torrent of paperback books. This mass of cheap paperbacks with their swashbuckling content act as a kind of litmus paper by which the cultists can recognise their ilk. There is no need to lend or even read the books. Just talking about them is enough. Examples of most-talked-about books are the four by Merlin Carothers—*Prison to Praise, Power in Praise, Praise Works* and *Answers to Praise.* Books by Dennis Bennett are also typical, but there are dozens more, most of them inexpensive, attractive, and shallow. As with the Carothers books, once one is produced by an author, others often follow to maintain the impetus.

Regrettably these, and other spiritual fun-books, including some of the biographical type, capture especially (though not exclusively) the attention of the young, who find them more appealing reading than either the Word of God or expositions of it.

Christian magazines have inevitably become involved with the sub-culture. *Buzz* and *His Paper* thrive on the pop idiom and the EA's *Crusade* shows no sign of editorial objectivity. Rather like a similar new evangelical paper, *Christianity Today*, the editorial policy is to include everything uncritically so that the Gospel becomes a hotch potch of liberalism, neo-pentecostalism, the evangelical sub-culture, dispensationalism and respectable orthodoxy.

In its lack of discernment, the Christian press stands at one with its secular counterpart. The secular press has no aim editorially, but depending on the amount of copy available at any one time the criterion for what is printed is "people will read that" or "that will fill a space nicely". The bosses of Fleet Street are primarily concerned that people read what they produce.

To those involved with books and publications, I put the following points. To publishers and would-be authors: are your publications worthy, consistent with Scripture, helpful and necessary?

To Christian bookshop proprietors: Can you honestly recommend all the books you are selling? Do you give this constant serious thought? When did you last send any books back as disagreeable? Do you display prominently books with garish covers and titles?

To the new evangelical magazines: The question, how long will you be all-absorbing, like a sponge? For like a sponge when we squeeze you we find you empty and lightweight. When did you last exclude a news item on the grounds that knowledge of it might be a hindrance to someone? To what extent do you copy the world in style and technique?

Papers such as the *Evangelical Times* are to be commended for high standards all round.

*Influence of secular media*

The principles which lie behind the national news media, particularly radio and television, are the same principles which have governed the rise of the sub-culture. Instant broadcasting has produced a self-opinionated medium which no longer only reports the news, but now makes it.

Except for the reporting of disasters, news has become opinion. A radio car parks outside a Government building in London where negotiations over miners' pay are taking place. "Mr. Foot, what do you have to say?" followed by, "Mr. Gormley, what do you have to say about what Mr. Foot has just said?" And someone asks Mr. Murray of the TUC and yet someone else tracks down the CBI.

Some Members of Parliament led by Brian Walden, M.P. for Birmingham, closely followed by David Crouch, MP for Canterbury, are heard as often in the radio studio as they are in Parliament. The anticipation of news is now more prevalent than ever. Studio panels discuss prospects for the future of the financial world, industry and employment, or a decision due the next day.

This kind of approach has been adopted in the sectors of evangelicalism we are examining. Few real developments take place, and life and interest is sustained more by the sayings of the folk-heroes. Like the news media, the whole has no end in sight. News is always news, dead when it is passed and like a vapour in the present.

Another interaction between the sub-culture and the secular press is that major events, like the Festival of Light and SPREE, have coveted publicity and coverage from the national news media. John Capon's book on the Festival of Light tells us that not only was there an eagerness for newspaper coverage, but there was pressure put on editors (and broadcasting authorities) to put right imbalances by publishing or broadcasting compensatory favourable features.

I suggest that to be God-conscious is to exclude any right to be press-conscious. The press is godless and even were we to make it prettier with our protests, we should not be tackling the root problem. Only if the Spirit of God gives understanding will any man, including any pressman, be capable of God-consciousness in his writing or reporting. Even then he will still only be fair, not propagandist. As a news reporter myself I no more believe in my newspaper as a means of divine revelation than a banker believes a rise in the value of sterling would influence a man's soul. The gospel is our only currency and by it alone will men be awakened.

I have said that few real developments take place in the sub-culture. This is true, but events which do happen are built up, by use of methods typical of the secular media, into matters of great importance. Each event—probably some special meeting like a "Come Together"—has three stages: expectation, participation, and reflection. The build-up period to the event is a time of rising expectation. This creates the climate in which the event can increasingly be looked upon as God-inspired, unprecedented and crucial. The second stage, participation, is so heavily conditioned by the expectations that the event must become in reality what it was built up to be. The atmosphere has been created. The third stage, reflection, is the basking in the glow of it all, savouring the fact that someone has announced that there have been "results". So God must have been involved.

These events trade in mass hypnosis. The build-up is external, and is fanned by what other people say; the participation is merely as a mem-

ber of a crowd, and the crowd not the individual is the unit; and the reflection is also governed by what is reported about the extent to which the purposes of the event were realised. At the end of the reflection stage, which probably coincides with the expectation stage of the next event, the participant has in fact gained no spiritual ground. The whole experience has been vacuous, esoteric and bordering on the mystical.

*Sensation-boosters*

Nothing in this evangelical sub-culture is sure to be of lasting value. Newness, not merit, is the all-governing criterion. In this subjective line of thought, spiritual values are not fixed, but are capable of change. Indeed, they must change, and the sensation boosters must be fired, or all becomes stale. There is no room, for example, for a fixed Bible. We must go from the RSV to the NEB to the TEV to the Living Bible—not for improvements but for newness. Hymns in modern style must be brought in to replace the existing ones, simply because familiar ones were written a long time ago. Innovations must take place in worship.

Platform speakers proclaim with melodrama: "God is doing a *new* thing in Korea". "God is working in this country as he's *never* worked before." "God is doing a *new* thing among young people today." Without this morale-boosting thrust, someone might rumble the whole thing. But it is an irresponsible approach, demanding no personal response from the announcer or listener. What God is doing in Korea affects virtually no one in England, and so a warm glow of satisfaction, inspired more by the warmth and well-being of the atmosphere than the wonder of God's work, makes the listener feel spiritual. I call this the "God Somewhere Else Theory". Jimmy and Carol Owens again: "The Holy Spirit today is being poured out in a marvellous way upon the people of God. He is doing a new work among His people throughout the world, drawing us together in love, in a move that transcends national and denominational walls".

It is a small wonder that so many of the sub-culture's followers are in an up and down state so often. Instead of being faced with a gracious, righteous and faithful God, they are faced with crises, often on matters concerning the Holy Spirit, healing, or commitment. Some go racing off to conferences, or cult-gatherings, to sort out their problems, hang-ups and disrupted family life. Lack of assurance is a common feature. Arminian doctrine teaches that man has contributed to his salvation. Thus he will be uncertain about it. This is particularly true when so much of what is regarded as real is obtained by experience and feeling alone. Where there is a break in momentum, or where the spiritual moods do not match the moods of everyday life, there is confusion. Because of departure from biblical foundations, the victim has not grounds to believe in his salvation. He may have testified many times about God's management of circumstances, but he has nothing to fall back on in the realm

of faith when trials come and so is deeply troubled. Because nothing is objectively trustworthy, any mood of despondency or depression is likely to sweep away all faith's anchors.

I have already mentioned the thoughtlessness which prevails among the people of the sub-culture. The lack of scepticism leads to an all-believing, all-assuming attitude which allows for no discerning check to guard against the deceiver. Any will to question is removed. A questioner would appear to be churlish, intolerant and a bit of an oddment, so error often goes unchallenged and harmful trends are unchecked. In summary, the sub-culture can be seen to feed off itself. It injects itself with its own sensation-booster. It depends very much on whip-ups, and one sensation must lead to another, lest the whole thing slow up and die. It justifies its activities by its results, measured in numbers, converts, offerings, blessings and circumstantial over-rulings. The Calvinistic stress on a thorough knowledge of God in all his attributes, and a sound doctrinal base, are totally absent.

*The way back*

Lest it seem that the sweeping wave of this past five years has been all-engulfing, let us note that there are godly people who are unruffled by the violence of the storm. God's grace and purpose has not been limited by evangelicalism's man-centred gospel. He has been nourishing roots of strength and assurance in his church in preparation for days of shaking, when those things which cannot be shaken will remain. The restoration of expository preaching, the lack of which has been the main cause of many of the present errors, is taking place.

The emergence of leadership by elders in churches should counteract the tendency which there has been to over-rate young people. They have been looked up to by their elders, and allowed to lead when they should have been in submission. Their enthusiasm and sometime frenzy has been interpreted as zeal and spiritual super-life, when it has been just natural exuberance. Their *joie de vivre* has been wrongly welcomed by many of the older brethren as evidence of some new thing that God is doing among young people.

In our publications we must be watchful. No literature, however good, can make up for any wrong example which we may set, and none can replace the ministry of the Word. But we must have written answers explaining to our evangelical contemporaries the things most surely believed among us. We have the advantage of the wide range of sound and helpful books published by the Banner of Truth. I have no doubt at all that there is more good in one of these volumes than in any twenty published by cult authors.

What should be the attitude of the believer who loves the doctrines of grace to the sub-culture with its tinsel and glamour? Separation and

example. Separation from things which captivate the majority is never to be feared. To condone something which is questionable would be a poor witness. The believer should be deliberate in attitude, not at all blurry or confused, and not afraid to say a thousand people could be wrong and he right. Above all we must be an example in our determination to stand fast by the doctrines which we cherish, being upbuilt always by the ministry of the Word and dabbling in nothing which might tarnish the glory of God's name.

*Editorial note.* Some readers may wonder why we are prepared to publish the article by Rod Badams in which he is critical of some aspects of the Festival of Light, especially when there is a need for the kind of witness that organisation is providing. Also it can be argued that evangelicals form part of the Council of reference which should be all the reassurance we require. The Council consists of Lord Beswick, John Boyd, Prof. Robert Boyd, Dora Bryan, Dr. Ernest Claxton, the Bishop of Coventry, Mrs. Peggy Fenner, Bishop Goodwin Hudson, Nigel Goodwin, Gilbert Kirby, the Bishop of Leicester, Ron Lewis, MP, Lord Longford, Malcolm Muggeridge, Rev. Iain H. Murray, Cliff Richard, Judge Ruttle, Ernest Shipham, John Stott, the Bishop of Truro and Paul Tucker.

As editors we do not necessarily endorse all the views of our contributors. We would not divide over an issue of this kind. Some say that such organisations are necessary because the churches are weak while others assert that there need be no conflict of interests between local churches and organisations. All would agree that ideally we should strive for healthy local churches as they alone have Scriptural warrant to function in a truly spiritual sense. Any local church worth its salt functions in a society as a whole influencing the schools, university (if there is one in the area), hospitals, old people's homes, a realistic percentage of the adult population, the press, police force and many children through the Sunday School and home meetings during the week. No organisation can be a substitute for local churches.

In co-operating with sacramentalists, mystics, entertainers, ecumenists and Anglican bishops who are notorious for their ability to be everything at once, there are problems. One of these is to work out whether the foundation is a purely civil one or whether it is "Christian". There is nothing to forbid believers co-operating for the common good in various realms; economic, defence, political, scentific or ecological. But when it comes to preaching the Gospel a meaningful doctrinal basis is needful. To start off with, what is a Christian? Is a man a Christian because he stands for morality and for freedom? Let it be stated clearly that it can be harder to convert a good moral man to Jesus Christ than an obvious sinner because a good man tends to cling to his own goodness for justification. This is very clearly illustrated in the ministry of our Lord (Luke 15:1, 2). Moreover the two tables of the moral law should not be separated, and no separation between the moral law and the Gospel should be allowed. If sin is being condemned then the atoning sacrifice of Christ and justification by faith should be held up at the same time.

When the Festival accomplishes good and when the Gospel is preached through the influence of evangelical members on their Council we rejoice. At the same time we are happy for Mr. Badams to express how he sees the situation as a professional journalist working in a rough and tumble world.

*Austin Walker, who writes this tribute to Professor Murray, is an elder of the Reformed Baptist church in Crawley. He also teaches at a local comprehensive school. Mr. Walker studied at Aberystwyth and later at Westminster Seminary.*

# A Tribute to Professor John Murray (1898-1975)

JOHN MURRAY, BEST KNOWN FOR HIS UNIQUE WORK AS PROFESSOR OF Systematic Theology at Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, and well known among ministers in this country for the impetus he gave as a preacher and chairman of the Leicester Conference in its early years, died at his home at Bonar Bridge, Sutherland, on May 8, 1975. He leaves a wife and two children.

He was born into a godly home, his parents being members of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. During the 1914-18 war he served in France and was wounded, losing the sight of one eye. Following his return home he moved south to the University of Glasgow. Having graduated, he left in 1924 for America and Princeton Theological Seminary where he was to receive both Bachelor of Theology and Master of Theology degrees.

In 1929 he began his teaching career which was to last 37 years. He taught at Princeton before beginning at Westminster in the fall of 1930. He was appointed Professor of Systematic Theology in 1937, which position he filled until his retirement in 1966.

I attended Westminster after that but found that Professor Murray's influence still remained. For example, a number of students had printed his class lectures and these were eagerly sought after and studied by many of us. Some of the faculty members themselves had been taught by him. One part of Machen Hall was nicknamed "Murray Heights" as he had resided there. Professor Murray paid one visit to Westminster to lecture after his retirement. On a previous occasion I had heard him preach in Aberystwyth and had been profoundly impressed by his theological perception, warmth and humility.

His contribution to the cause of Christ's church is very important. His great strength lay in the spirituality which gave his teaching, preaching

and writing its peculiar depth and unction. He was, above all, a precise textual exegete and this regulated his theology. He was an intense preacher and teacher and could not endure any interruption either in his concentration or that of his students. The story has to be related of a cat which, entering the classroom, distracted the hearers. Without any interruption in his delivery as he paced up and down (his normal practice) Professor Murray picked up the cat and dropped it out of the window. Being so carried away by the subject he overlooked the fact that he was on the first floor. The drop was considerable. "Puss" survived and so did the lecture!

Though he himself studied in the "old Princeton" of the Hodges and Warfield he was not completely bound by that tradition. Thoroughly committed to a high doctrine of Scripture he was not afraid to differ in minor respects from the Westminster Confession if he felt that Scriptural exegesis required it. This reflects the honesty with which he approached the Scriptures. He made important contributions to theological study, clarifying aspects of the doctrine of the Scripture, the imputation of Adam's sin, definitive sanctification and the doctrine of the Church.

He served as a faithful presbyter and much sought after counsellor in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, and was elected moderator of the Assembly of 1961. He was not only concerned, however, with assemblies, committees and students. For example, he taught a Bible class in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church which he attended. Following his return to Scotland he ministered to a Free Church of Scotland congregation in Ardgay, Ross-shire, and also began a Christian school in Sutherland.

There is little doubt that he will be remembered most of all for his writings, too numerous to mention here. In days when the Reformed faith was almost forgotten John Murray's pen was busy and now when the doctrines are enjoying credence once more his writings are being appreciated. None can read his works without being enriched in mind and heart. Besides articles published mainly in the "Westminster Theological Journal" and the "Presbyterian Guardian" and in booklets, there are a number of outstanding theological and biblical works. Among those of great value are his commentary on Romans (1960), *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (1955) and *Principles of Conduct* (1957). Smaller, but no less significant, works are *The Imputation of Adam's Sin* (1959), *Calvin on Scripture and Divine Sovereignty* (1960), *Divorce* (1961) and *Christian Baptism* (1961). We are encouraged to know that the Banner of Truth Trust (of which Professor Murray was a trustee) intends to publish Volume 1 of his collected writings in 1976. It will be the church's great loss if we ignore them.

A "master in Israel" has been taken from us—a warm hearted student and teacher of the Word of God. May God raise up other worthy men to fill the gap that has been left.—AUSTIN WALKER, June, 1975.

*Alan Kreider is the pastor of the Mennonite congregation in London and Warden of the Mennonite centre in which the church meets. He and his wife have lived in this country several years. Their home town is Goshen in the U.S.A., where there is a strong Mennonite community. The Mennonite churches are direct descendants of the 16th century Anabaptists, and Mr. Kreider, who specialises in history, has been invited to speak at the next Westminster conference on the subject of Anabaptist thinking in a revolutionary age. The article below is a summarised transcript of a lecture given by Mr. Kreider in Haywards Heath.*

# Christianity and Social Responsibility

THE QUESTION OF WHAT THE CHRISTIAN OUGHT TO BE DOING IN SOCIETY is a very controversial one in certain circles. How ought the Christian to respond to injustice, to grinding need, to the oppression that exists in the world? There are intense debates and, it seems, there is often a polarisation of opinion with regard to these matters. The two polar opposites are, first, the activists who argue that Christians should be deeply involved in what is going on, and, second, the quietists, who think that Christians should stay out of social issues as much as possible.

Activists are extremely socially concerned. Religion, in their opinion, has over the past centuries often been simply a drug to keep the poor in their place. They point to Jesus as the healer, the person who cared about oppression and disease, who treated all people as equal. Likewise, Christians should be spurred to concern for the poor, the hungry and the downtrodden. The needs, say the activists, are great, the time is short—we must get to work. Many of them are very interested in revolution and would align themselves with Marxist ideology because, they say, the establishment is so rotten that only the most drastic action will have any effect.

Quietists, in contrast, feel that the activists have been taken over by the spirit of our age. They point to books such as *First the Kingdom*, by a Roman Catholic activist. "Seek ye first the kingdom." Which kingdom? The political kingdom is the answer to this writer. The way to salvation of a purely earthly sort is through politics. Quietists reject this as modernism, as a political non-gospel. They maintain that the true impact of the gospel, the good news, comes to individuals, not societies. The Christian gospel changes people by conversion. Thus the only real way to help the needy soul is to bring him the gospel. Salvation is a spiritual thing and anything else is superficial. After all, did not Jesus say that the poor would always be with us? Furthermore, in order to preserve the purity of the gospel, quietists emphasise personal devotion, study of the Scrip-

ture and non-materialist values amidst a secular and materialistic age which measures success by possessions.

To some extent there are problems with both these positions. I believe that the biblical call is for us to live not only a life of joy in Christ, but also a life of active involvement in the world. Christians of soundness, of concern, of purity of testimony are needed to confront the issues of the world.

I suggest that there are three important factors to be borne in mind in considering our rôle as Christians in society.

*1. Christians must be Christ-centred*

As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3:11, "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ". Christ is our foundation in two ways. Firstly, he is our foundation through his sacrificial, redemptive work by which he defeated the rebellious principalities and powers, saved us from our sins and freed us for service. This is not our work but is by God's mercy (Titus 3:5). Any approach which ignores the centrality of Christ's work is going to fail. Secondly, the life and teaching of Jesus are at the heart of the Christian faith. He is not only Saviour, he is also Master and Lord. He who says he abides in Christ ought to walk as Christ walked (1 John 2:6). This means attempting to model ourselves on the central thrusts of Christ's life. Sacrifice, obedience, love—these things must be taken extremely seriously. Jesus himself in his final interview with his disciples set the model of foot-washing (John 13). He toured the room as a servant and told them to do the same. Yet the church has often forgotten this. Often Christians have lorded it over other people.

Thus through Christ we are both saved and taught; both redeemed and instructed. Ephesians, chapter 2, verses 8 to 10, gives us the whole picture. We are saved by God's mercy, not by our merit. But we are called to good works. The second arises out of the first. Both are necessary.

*2. Christians must be church-based*

We live in a society that is increasingly individualistic. In the Western world we find, in contrast to societies in the past or in other parts of the world today, that the individual is increasingly cut off from the groups which have provided him with a kind of home. In the past there was vastly less geographical mobility than there is now. People had ties in a village, in a clan, or in a family. This gave a sense of rooting and belonging. This in turn provided a sense of "personhood"—of knowing who I am. All this has changed. Modern industry will shift people around at *its* convenience rather than for the person's good and thus all permanence is lost. Aeroplanes and trains make for rapid movement. Urbanisation brings people from the countryside into the city. Television has increasingly meant that people spend most evenings on their own rather than in community activities. Neighbours in blocks of flats hardly know one another in many cases.

In turn, the church has reflected these changes. It has accepted that Christians should live as individuals rather than as communities. The result is alienation, loneliness and even despair. I believe the church should be fighting this individualism in its attempt to be faithful. Christ has saved us individually but has called us into a new community. We can call this simply "the gathered church" because it is a gathering together of believers. A Christian by himself will very often be powerless to deal with difficult situations and it is by the witness and wisdom of the Spirit working in the gathered church that the Christian can be free to fulfil his potential in Christ.

It is striking how often in the New Testament the words used to describe Christians are not "individual" words but collective or plural words. According to Romans, chapter 12, and 1 Corinthians, chapter 12, we are the body of Christ. The body has many parts, and any individual part will lack purpose, without the other parts. The little finger can hardly function effectually without the hand, to say nothing of the arm! In Luke, chapter 18, Jesus refers to his followers as a family. Paul, in Galatians, chapter 6, talks about the household of faith. Peter uses a whole number of terms (1 Pet. 2), such as chosen generation, royal priesthood, holy nation. One person does not make a generation! One priest does not make a priesthood. In all of these instances the total is greater than the sum of the individual parts.

We see in this brief study the importance of the church. I do not mean the national church, nor the church where one can go on Sunday morning and disappear into a throng, or disappear into a rear pew—ten feet from the nearest worshipper! The church is not there to provide anonimity. Neither is it there to provide spiritual fuel on Sunday to someone who is then going to become an individualist for the rest of the week. The early church met daily for fellowship (Acts 2:46). A true church involves us all in each other, making us members of one another and building us into a loving, caring community. Old and young, widows and orphans—all are cared for (1 John 2:12-14, James 1:27, Acts 6:1). We share the same life-blood in this body—the ministry of the Word. From the Scriptures we share the same thoughts, concern and purpose. In doing this we will be fulfilling in part the apostle Paul's injunction not to be conformed to the world (Rom. 12:2). We will be wholly different from at least the world of modern Western individualism.

*3. Christians must be faithful to the gospel*

In order to be faithful, the church as a gathered community in society must first preach the gospel. It must do this with clarity, winsomeness and power. This is vital.

The church must also show faithfulness by the attitudes and actions of the church members in society. There are numerous pronouncements in the Bible on what might today be called "social" issues (e.g. Matt. 23:4,

Luke 3:12-14, 9:10-17, 11:46, 14:21, James 5:4). I want to focus attention on one section of the teaching of Jesus, in which we see how we are expected to react to a series of problems which Jesus faced in his lifetime and which we also face. The section is Matthew, chapter 25, verses 31 to 46, where we read of Jesus' discussion with his disciples at the end of the Olivet discourse. Jesus describes to them how all men will be divided at the judgment, according to whether they belong to the righteous or the wicked. The former inherit eternal life, while the latter are sent to eternal punishment.

In the last hour, says Jesus, we shall be judged. The judgment will not be according to how frequently we have said, "Lord, Lord", not solely by the unimpeachableness of our orthodoxy, but by the faithfulness with which we have fed the hungry, given drink to the thirsty, welcomed the stranger, clothed the naked and visited those who are sick or in prison. Much of this was the vision of Isaiah as quoted by Christ in Luke 4:18, 19. He had come to preach to the poor, to release captives, to recover sight to the blind and liberty to the oppressed. While these categories can be understood spiritually, the primary reference is undoubtedly to the literal work of our Lord. For Christ, this ministry meant the cross. For the early church, this kind of life and testimony brought persecution. But Jesus demands of us this kind of concern today. My contention is that normally this cannot happen through purely individual action. The parable of the good Samaritan shows the exception. Nevertheless, action is often required on a broader front. At this point the activists shout, "Politics! Revolution! Hack down the society and build a new one based on love". But can this be reconciled with the teaching of Paul, that we must obey the powers that exist (Rom. 13)? Often, too, the activists display a superficial view of man, failing to come to grips with human depravity. Despite this, we must seriously consider how to use politics as a vehicle for Christian action in society. The fact that the early Christians did not do so is a problem to some, but we should remember that they had no recourse to democratic processes such as we have.

My own thinking is that Jesus, and the early Christians, took a different road from political activism for deeper reasons. The early church changed the world. By their love and radiant attractiveness they had overwhelming influence in society. But we never find them hiring teams of sociologists to analyse the various defects of society such as the problem of slavery. They simply made slaves, and slave-masters, into brothers in the Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, the early church confronted social evils, but it did so through the radiance and the love inherent in the brotherhood.

I often wonder whether, despite the example of prominent social reformers like Wilberforce and the Clapham Sect, the church is not a more potent force for social change than are political bodies. Should we not therefore concentrate on building up bodies of believers through admon-

ishing and the preaching of the Word, and by this means demonstrate the power of the gospel, in contrast to embroiling the church in politics—if by this we mean the power of Parliament, Congress or the Supreme Soviet? If by polities, however, we mean the way people organise themselves, then the early church was political. It was an alternative form of society. The gathered church had different values and aims from the rest of society. The members lived in society but were definitely not governed by its principles.

It is helpful to examine each of the elements mentioned by Jesus in the parable of the sheep and the goats.

1. *Feeding the hungry and providing for the thirsty.* In this country we find few people who are at starvation point. But in India the situation is very different. Internationally there is great need. Because we may not see hungry people round about us, do we ignore the problem? There are ways we can help. We can look for relief agencies which use funds faithfully, keep honest accounts and, if possible, maintain a Christian testimony. Perhaps we can send some of our own people to help in these organisations. Our Mennonite churches are intimately involved in this kind of work. We have a relief society which, since the first world war, has been attempting to feed the hungry. Naturally we can do only a small amount, but it is the responsibility of us all to struggle with this problem of famine and hunger.

2. *Taking in strangers.* The problem of mobility raises the problem of loneliness. If we, as the family of God, have overcome loneliness and isolation, we must share this with the strangers. It seems to me that on the broad front the church has not really faced up to its responsibility. The gathered churches are beginning to do so and this I find wonderful. The opportunities for visiting and hospitality are immense. Our danger is doing it in a superficial way without becoming too involved.

3. *Clothing the naked.* Again, it does not seem that many people in England are under-clad—except by choice! But perhaps we overlook the problem of heating for old people. This, in a sense, is clothing the naked. People die every year from our hard winters. May it not be an outworking of Christian compassion to help those who do not have enough money to heat themselves? Another possibility is the occurrence of a natural disaster. A storm or a fire can deprive people of homes. Is it always the responsibility of the local or national government to attend to this? To confront this need we have a body in our churches called the Mennonite Disaster Service. People will lay aside their work when a disaster has occurred (I should mention that many are self-employed), and go to rebuild homes. In this way life can be re-created in a community which has perhaps been struck by a hurricane or some other ravage. A third application relevant to us is our housing problem. In England the price of houses has rocketed in the past two or three years. People find it very

hard to get any kind of property. Land is very expensive. Is it possible for a gathered church to at least help to take care of its members? Our local church in USA launched one project in which people in the church would spend evenings, together with people who were having housing difficulties, and would build houses. This is done in the name of Christ. Long opportunities were also provided, during common labour, to talk. I realise, of course, that practical situations vary from area to area and country to country. I am only making suggestions. Each gathered church must think through the needs in its own area.

4. *Caring for the sick.* The church might appear to be rendered irrelevant in this area by the professional medical services, whether state or private. Yet these services often fail to give personal contact, or any degree of humanity and warmth. People are healed, not only medically, but as whole persons, usually through contact with people who care for them. Power to care is so obvious in the ministry of Jesus. Can the hurried consultant, running down the hall looking at a list of people, really care for each patient? Even the nurse finds it hard. We may be called to a work of spiritual and psychological healing as gathered churches.

5. *Visiting the prisoner.* Having visited prisons on several occasions in the United States, and having once lived in a prison (on a religious retreat!), I can vouch for the degree to which these institutions degrade and dehumanise the people who are in them, rather than bringing them back and giving them the chance to become "whole" again. How can we approach prisoners? How can we convince them that they are not in there because we want to bludgeon them and get them out of the way, but that although they are there justly (and I would not wish to minimise the retributive aspect), yet we love them because we have been saved by Jesus Christ. We must convince the prisoners that they are not utterly repulsive but they have value as those made in the image of God.

The thing which strikes us forcibly in the parable of the sheep and the goats is that Jesus is very much present in each of these situations. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." I am aware that the first application of these words would be to those who are indeed the brethren of Christ—that is, believers. But we must, according to Scripture, do good unto all men, though especially to those of the household of faith (Gal. 6:10).

Perhaps we can minister to the needy through our work, by choosing employment which will give more opportunities, or it may be that some evenings will be devoted to these ministries.

However we do it, the Christian faith requires us to have sensitivity to social need and oppression. This is not a social gospel. This is not the gospel. It is a fruit of the gospel. Jesus said, by their fruits ye shall know them.

# Correspondence

## Present Truth Magazine

*A number of our readers may be familiar with the magazine* Present Truth *which is edited in Australia and printed in California. Its emphasis on justification by faith has been refreshing. Which way will it go in the future? This concern is shown in the following letter to ex-Seventh Day Adventist R. D. Brinsmead.*

Mr. R. D. Brinsmead,
P.O. Box 1311,
Fallbrook,
California 92028,
U.S.A.

February 25, 1975

Dear Mr. Brinsmead,
For some time I have desired to write to you to express appreciation for the magazine *Present Truth.* It has been thrilling to see the strong assertion of Justification by Faith and also the extraordinary and effective antidote to false subjectivism which abounds wherever there is a lack of true expository preaching.

It is also a mighty encouragement to read the issue in which you examine false views of prophecy, dispensationalism in particular, and find them wanting! The need is vast for strong assertion of Justification by Faith and the establishment of right views of Sanctification based on sound teaching rather than on feelings. Also dispensationalism has become the curse of the age, dividing Christian from Christian and that on the basis of an elaborate system arbitrarily imposed on the Scripture without any warrant whatsoever. It will be a glad day when the scourge of dispensationalism is removed.

The November 1974 issue of *Present Truth* (Vol. 3, No. 5) was not so pleasing and I refer in particular to your article which smacked of universalism. Is this due to the nefarious influence of Karl Barth? To assert universalism from Romans 5:18 is extraordinary when the whole context concerns two races of men which are quite distinct from each other, namely, the race redeemed in Christ and the race lost in Adam. To take verse 18 out of that context and use it in the way you do is to fall miles below the standard of the previous issues.

With bated breath we have watched the progress of *Present Truth* hoping all along that it would not end in retrogression! If progress is to be made we need to build upon the foundations laid by the 16th century reformation. John Calvin and those who followed him in England (particularly the English Puritans), Scotland and Holland went much further in a consistent positive understanding of soteriology than did the Lutherans. This progress is reflected in the Westminster Confession and in the 1689 Baptist Confession which of course follows Westminster.

The mention of the 1689 Confession reminds us too that the Reformers were confused on the doctrine of The Church, and Sacralism has been a hindrance ever since. The 16th century reformation needs completion and this will only transpire when the doctrine of the church is clarified. The emergence of the reformed Baptist movement throughout the world is one of the most encouraging signs of our generation because it indicates a movement of the Holy Spirit in

which the best of the Reformation is retained and that which is erroneous rejected.

Of course here I am merely asserting these things but in other places have sought to elucidate them and provide proof from Scripture. I have sent to you various publications which have appeared in this country which we believe to be significant and promise to continue to send such materials.

It is certain that you will not be offended by my letter because of the refreshing openness and frankness which you show by publishing correspondence in *Present Truth* which is utterly hostile as well as that which is favourable. It was a joy both to meet and to hear Geoffrey Paxton preach when I was in Australia. I pray that you will follow him in soteriology and that you both will follow C. H. Spurgeon in his biblical doctrine of baptism and the local church.
In Christ, our great High Priest.
Erroll Hulse.

*Mr. Jarnes, the Publishing Editor, replied on behalf of Mr. Brinsmead. The substance of his letter was directed to the issue of the extent of the atonement only, which is quoted as follows:*

Mr. Brinsmead is of course quite familiar with the difficulty you may have with his thoughts on Christ's provision for all men by His death. He is greatly indebted to the theology of John Calvin, and frequently carries with him his outstanding *Institutes.* However, along with some other very fine Calvinistic scholars, such as Berkouwer for instance, Mr. Brinsmead does have difficulty on Calvin's double predestination doctrine. On the other hand, he has great difficulty with the theology of Arminius also, for those who follow his line of thought look at faith and free will as some contribution that the sinner makes toward his own salvation. Here he stands with Calvin on his magnificent emphasis on the sovereignty of God, and how the entire initiative of our salvation comes from Him.

We realise that this can be a difficult area whereby the Scripture teaches, on the one hand, predestination, and it seems to our editor, on the other hand, the death of Christ for the whole world. There are so many of these statements (concerning the latter concept) that it appears to Mr. Brinsmead that the ultra-Calvinist has difficulty bending these statements to fit the concept of double predestination. However, one must admire the great objective emphasis of Calvinism, and it certainly avoids the pitfall of humanism and subjectivism. You will detect that in this area our editor follows the Lutheran line of thought rather than the Calvinistic. He is not Lutheran, however, and especially does he see that Calvin was precisely correct on his view of the Supper, whereas Luther was in error.

*Ian Randall answered the above as follows:*

Norman Jarnes Esq.,
Publishing Editor,
"Present Truth",
P.O. Box 1311,
Fallbrook,
California, 92028,
U.S.A.

May 31, 1975

Dear Mr. Jarnes,

Thank you for your letter of April 18 to Mr. Hulse.

We appreciated your taking up the point about universal atonement, a doctrine which we believe to be unscriptural and misleading. You state, in contrast, that there are "many Scriptures" which teach the death of Christ for the whole world. In correspondence like this we cannot go into detailed exposition of these Scriptures. But I would recommend, if you have not already studied it, the careful reading of *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* by the Puritan John Owen, probably the greatest theologian England has ever produced.

In this work he deals thoroughly with all Scriptures which *seem* to teach universal atonement, showing that they do not, and in addition marshalls together the many Scriptural evidences for particular redemption. J. I. Packer in his introduction suggests that Owen's argument has never been refuted. It was the result of "more than seven years serious inquiry . . . into the mind of God about these things", said Owen. This cannot be just lightly dismissed!

One reason why we believe firmly in limited atonement is that it alone views the work of Christ on the cross as having the guaranteed success which Scripture indicates it must have: "He *shall* see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied . . ." If Christ died for all, but not all are saved, then Christ partially died in vain. Also I believe that compromise on the atonement leads to compromise on the doctrine of election. This is very evident in Mr. Brinsmead's writing. He states that we must tell each unconverted man "that his sins have been borne by Jesus Christ, that he has been chosen and accepted in the Person of his Representative and that, consequently, God now calls upon him to repent and believe the gospel". To say that every man is chosen sounds to me like pure (or impure!) Barthianism, and blatant error. In addition, it contradicts what Mr. Brinsmead said later in his article—that the Bible calls no-one elect who has not come to faith. But "chosen" and "elect" are exactly the same thing in Scripture. So we call unbelieving people elect and non-elect in the same breath. This is surely confusion!

The fact that, as Mr. Brinsmead says, the common blessings of life *may* have been secured for all men by the atonement is not really the point at dispute. What is in dispute is whether salvation for all men was really secured on the cross. If it was, we are left with a redemption which does not redeem, a reconciliation which does not reconcile, a propitiation which does not propitiate—in short, a salvation which does not actually save! All it does is provide the potential of salvation. Whether it becomes actual or not is up to man. The pitfall of humanism and subjectivism seems to have been well and truly fallen into by following that path! We have the unacceptable spectacle of the Spirit attempting to apply to a man that atonement procured for him, but that man being able to nullify all that Christ has done. We have the further spectacle of the devil in hell gleefully announcing that all the souls there were those for whom Christ shed his blood, blood which did not avail.

We are not, of course, denying that the merit of Christ's sacrifice is infinite. It is the intention of God as to the extent of the atonement which is crucial. Another book I recommend is by Prof. John Murray: *Redemption Accomplished and Applied.*

Just two other things, briefly: firstly, to say, as Mr. Brinsmead did several times, that election is not the starting point of our salvation, is refuted by a study of Ephesians, chapter one; secondly, your own introduction of double predestination merely clouds the issue—some Calvinists believe in double predestination and some (like Spurgeon) did and do not. All believe in particular redemption. I wonder, by the way, if you are right to use the term "Lutheran" to describe a position which is opposed to double predestination? Luther's comments on predestination in his *Bondage of the Will* are, if anything, stronger than Calvin's!

I hope these comments will be of some little help.
Your sincerely,
Ian M. Randall (Assistant Editor, *Reformation Today*).

*Concluding observation. The vital issues of the local church and sacralism have in this correspondence been unanswered. The doctrine of the church and the doctrine of salvation go together. Confuse the one and you confuse the other. Let the church issue be central today. Sacralism has been a calamity. We will contend for the biblical doctrine of the local church.*

## Do you Swear?

The ten commandments are given by God as the rule for all without exception, which commandments include, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain" (Ex. 20: 7). Everyone will be judged by this standard. The righteous will inherit eternal life and the wicked will be cast into hell. Of course this presents problems. Paul tells us that the natural, unregenerate man is at enmity to God, is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. In other words every unregenerate man who has not the Spirit of Christ is going to express his nature, because, out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks. If his conversation is dirty it is because his heart is dirty. If his words are ungodly it is because his heart is at enmity to God. Does this mean that non-Christians (I equate true Christians with those who have been transformed by the Holy Spirit) cannot keep the law in any way? Yes! It means that until a man is converted he cannot possibly please God, as Paul puts it, "They that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8: 7, 8). The ungodly man does nothing out of love for Jesus Christ. All he does is self-centred or world-centred. What is the use then of the law? The law is excellent because it shows men up and reveals their true state. Every time a man curses he is declaring himself to be a sinner and a rebel. He is proving all that the Bible says about him as a depraved and corrupt sinner. He is wearing his black heart on his sleeve and inviting others to declare themselves likewise. The law is also good in that it restrains sin. Outwardly at least men can keep the law. Men do not normally kill each other in the streets, do not keep two or three wives, do not steal from their firms, do show some respect for their parents and do put some restraint on their language. The law is valuable because it reminds men of what is right. The conscience responds to the law and enforces it to some extent.

Our Lord in expounding the ten commandments said that we should not swear at all, not by God, or by powers, people or buildings (Matt. 4: 34-37). He declared all swearing to be evil, which includes cursing, profanity, blasphemy, obscenity or vulgarity. *Swearing* expresses aggressiveness which follows frustration in words which possess strong emotional associations. *Cursing* implies the desire of evil upon its object. *Profanity* is speech which despises or degrades God or that which is sacred and true. *Obscenity* is the use of ugly or indecent words. *Vulgarity* is the use of crude words.

Do you curse or swear? If you do it is a certain sign of your unregenerate state! Hell is the place of swearing because hell is the place for unchanged God-haters, but there will be no cursing in heaven because it does not belong to the nature of the true believer to swear. You say, "I swear, so what?" Well you may swear but you are to know it is an offence to God and those who speak for him (and he has never lacked such) tell you that unless you repent you will perish. Your great need is a change of heart and faith in Jesus Christ.

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